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SUBJECT CIA's Profile of Saddam Hussein

MIKE SCHNEIDER: The military and diplomatic pressure appears to be backing the Iraqi President into a corner now, but will he come out fighting. That's a question that U.S. intelligence agencies are trying to answer, as John Scali reports.

JOHN SCALI: Saddam Hussein, sometimes called "The Madman of the Middle East". Is he so driven by dreams of glory that he won't back down no matter how powerful the opposition? This is one of the crucial questions in the personality profile of Saddam prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency to help guide President Bush in his decisions. The CIA answer is sort of yes and no. It emphasizes that Saddam Hussein is both sane and rational, but also a fanatic who is determined and stubborn.

In a crisis such as that brought on by his sudden invasion of Kuwait, he's likely to pause as he seems to be doing now, to reappraise his next move.

Professor Jerrold Post, who once directed preparation of such profiles for the government believes Saddam is not as fanatic[all] as some others believe.

PROFESSOR JERROLD POST (former CIA official): He has a sense of patience, he has a sense of time. And in the past when he has moved too quickly he has been able to withdraw to delay his achievement to revolutionary immortality until another time.

SCALI: The CIA profile seeks to foreshadow what he may do by highlighting past patterns of behavior such as his willingness to accept enormous casualties on the battlefield as he has in the war

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with Iran. Saddam justifies this as necessary to destroy foreign enemies seeking to block his becoming supreme leader of the entire Arab world.

Which Saddam Hussein will decide for his country, the fanatic or the pragmatist? The British and French intelligence services are reported as uncertain as the CIA. Amidst the pessimism it must be noted there are knowledgeable experts outside the government who detect signs that Saddam is becoming increasingly frightened.

John Scali, ABC News, Washington.